



World Christian Fellowship

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Test yourself- Are you a Christian?

Part 04

1. Fellowship with God and Christ
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3. Obedience to Word of God
4. Hating Evil
5. Waiting for Christ 2nd Coming
6. Decreasing Pattern of Sin in Your Life

7. Loving Other Christians

1 John 3:10, *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*

To amplify that point, let's go back to a key section we missed in our progressive study of John's letter.

1 John 2:9-11, *"The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling*

in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes".

To say you are in the light is to claim to be a Christian.

If so, your life would certainly show some of the life patterns of Christ. Loving fellow Christians is one very basic pattern. To be in fellowship with Christ is to experience and express love. If you claim to be a Christian but do not even like Christians, your claim is a sham. You are in fact walking in darkness, not in the light.

Loving fellow Christians comes naturally to the believer.

1 Thessalonian 4:9, *"[Regarding] the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another"*

Nevertheless, he went on to encourage them to "excel still more" in their love for one another (v. 10). As believers, we haven't loved as fully as we ought to love, but we have loved. And we don't need to be taught to love because it's instinctive, implicit, and inherent within our new nature.

Romans 5:5, "The love of God has been poured out within our hearts."

Jesus defined about who is a Christian?

John 13:34-35, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

It is basic to our Christian life that we have the capacity to love one another from the heart.

1 Peter 1:22, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

It's a love that goes beyond mere feeling to encompass dutiful responsibility, sacrificial service, and sensitive concern.

The test:

Do you characteristically love other believers?

If you claim to be a Christian but have no love in your heart for those in the church or any track record of meeting their needs, then the apostle John says this to you: You're in the dark in spite of your claim to be in the light. Love is a test of divine life. It signifies you have crossed over from darkness to light. This is how

1 John 3:14-15, *"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."*

Do you honestly care about other believers or are you cold, uncaring, and indifferent?

Do you have a desire to reach out and meet their needs?

Those who don't care are spiritually dead, characterized by an ongoing hatred.

In our sophisticated age, that is manifested not so much in vitriolic hostility as in an utterly self-centered approach to life.

People who continually focus on themselves and couldn't care less what happens to anyone else are of their father the devil, who "was a murderer from the beginning" (**John 8:44**).

As believers, however, "we know love by this, that [Christ] laid down His life for us" quite the opposite of the devil's murderous character.

Many of us know John 3:16, but how many Christians know about 1 John 3:16?

1 John 3:16, *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

John defined love as making sacrifices for others, perhaps even to the point of martyrdom.

How do you respond to the opportunities you typically have to sacrifice your time, treasures, and talents?

Are you happy when you come across a person or ministry in need, and you are able to provide money, time, prayer, a commodity, a skill, or a sympathetic ear?

What about enjoying the privilege of fellowship in general? Do you look forward to being with fellow Christians and talking with them, sharing with them, discussing the things of God with them, studying the Word with them, and praying with them?

Do you have a desire to take the resources God has given you and apply them to someone else in the family of God?

Evidence of love explained by John.

1 John 3:17-18, *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

The result of such a practical approach to love?

1 John 3:19-21, *And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*

The assurance that you are a Christian and your faith is the real thing will come by your love.

The Greek word translated "assure" (peitho) means to pacify, tranquilize, soothe, or persuade.

You can soothe yourself as you stand before God that you are a true Christian if you see love in your life.

Now your love won't be perfect, but it will be there.

Let that bolster your assurance, for John warned that your heart or conscience may try to incriminate you and make you doubt. The fallen flesh has the capability to play games with your mind.

Satan, the accuser of the brethren, may seek to exploit that tendency. In whatever your heart condemns you, you can be assured if you see love in your life. You may doubt your salvation, but God never does because He is greater than your heart and knows all things.

We have been comanded by God to love one another.

1 John 3:23, *And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

1 John 4:21, *And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

Perhaps you are going through doubt and struggling with your assurance. Do as John said and go back to the love of your life: Examine whether you love other Christians as evidenced by deeds of kindness and sacrifice. If that's characteristic of your life, be soothed, be pacified—for no matter what your heart may do to condemn you, you can be sure of your salvation.

A condemning conscience can rob you of your assurance because it looks only at failure. But God is greater than your conscience.

God looks at your faith in Christ.

The apostle Peter, after denying Christ three times, had a worse time than any of us can imagine with a condemning heart. Jesus came personally to assure him.

John 21:15-17, *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."* ¹⁶*He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."*

¹⁷*He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You*

know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.

Three times in a row He inquired gently about Peter's devotion. In desperation, Peter replied, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You"

We too can appeal to the love God sees in our hearts.

It's not perfect but, again, it's there.

Love will express itself through deeds of kindness and sacrifice to others.

Jesus told Peter to reveal his love by taking care of the church. It's natural for the Christian to do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Galatians 6:10, *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Your love for fellow Christians is a benchmark of the Christian faith, and solid grounds for assurance. Refuse to let your heart condemn what God does not.

I know that I should love that person, but how do I do it?

Here are the steps:

1. You must confess lack of love as sin.

That lack of love in your heart, "unlove," is sin. When your heart attitude is wrong, you must acknowledge it and confess it to God as sin. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin confessed as sin, but it does not cleanse you when I excuse yourself.

2. You must count on the fact that, in Christ, you died to the sin of unlove.

You can be delivered from any sin by counting on the fact that, in Christ, you died to that sin.

Romans 6:1-2, *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"*

No Christian should continue to live in sin. Why?

Because, in Christ, he died to sin. In Christ, we died to the sin of unlove. Let us make these verses personal:

What shall I say then? Shall I continue in this sin of unlove, that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall I, who died to this sin of unlove, live any longer in it?

Must I be a slave to this sin of unlove the rest of my life?

No!

God's Word says that I died to this sin. I must step out in faith, believing God's Word.

3. You must choose to love that person.

You are controlled by the decision of your will and not by your feelings.

You cannot control your feelings, but you can control your will. You cannot make yourself have a feeling of love toward someone, but you can choose to love that person.

If you make that choice and hold to it, you will find that your feelings will, in time, follow the choice of your will. The important thing to remember is this: You are controlled by the decision of your will and not by feelings.

what if that person doesn't respond to my love?

You can love him anyway.

Matthew 5:43-44, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."*

4. You must trust God to do what you cannot do.

Paul said in Romans 7 that he could "will" or choose what is right, but that he could not of his own ability do it. Paul learned that he had to depend on the Holy Spirit within him to enable him to do it.

this is true of us also. You may choose to love someone you don't love but you will discover that in yourself you cannot do it.

You must depend on the Holy Spirit within you to enable you to do it.

Holy Spirit will do this, but You must make the decision.

"Lord, I choose to love that person. In myself I cannot do it. I am trusting You to enable me to do it."

God is always ready to enable us to carry out a decision that is in accordance with His Word. But we must choose it.

Job 22:28, *"You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you"*

5. You must pray that person into my heart.

Sometimes, even after you have asked God to work, nothing seems to happen.

What to do next?

Begin to pray for that person. Pray that God will bless that person.